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ABSTRACT

Written for parents and other caregivers, this handbook describes techniques and strategies to use to effectively change children's behavior when it is necessary to do so. The first three sections focus on the need for caregivers to understand themselves, their tolerance levels, preferences, and needs in order to clarify their strengths and weaknesses; the need to organize children's living and play environments in ways supportive of self-control and independent play; and the need to set developmentally appropriate limits on children's behavior. The fourth section specifies principles for changing children's behavior. Discussion suggests how to support acceptance, ways of giving guidance, when to intervene, and how to talk with children. The fifth section concerns ways of avoiding power struggles by employing effective rules and by being persistent and willing to compromise. Section six describes six techniques for changing children's behavior: using consequences, redirection, restraint or holding, time out, reinforcement, and problem solving. Concluding remarks list principles of effective discipline. A brief, selected bibliography is provided. (RH)

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A Behavior Management Handbook

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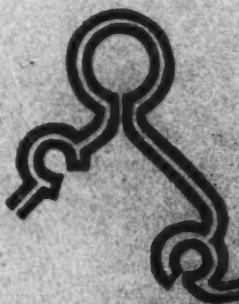

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YOU CAN'T MAKE ME!

A Behavior Management Handbook

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PREFACE

This handbook is one of a series written especially for parents and other caregivers. The series includes:

What Should I Do - A handbook on Emergency Care and Safety

Kitchen Magic - A handbook on Nutrition and Cooking

Listen to Me - PLEASE - A handbook on Communication

You Can't Make Me - A handbook on Behavior Management

The Developing Child Series - Handbooks on Child Development

"The Critical Years" - Birth to Two

"The Play Years" - Two to Six

"The School Years" - Six to Eleven

"The Searching Years" - Adolescence

We have given you an overview of some of the major areas involved in caring for children. You will find these handbooks useful on your first reading as well as a ready reference for the years to come.

Children are the most precious resource our country has. As parents and caregivers, we should be knowledgeable about children and their needs.

Mary Jo Crist, B.S.
Madeline E. Ehlert, M.Ed.
Judith K. Schneider, Ph.D.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

UNDERSTANDING OURSELVES..... 3

ORGANIZING THE ENVIRONMENT..... 7

SETTING REASONABLE LIMITS.....11

PRINCIPLES FOR CHANGING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR.....16

- How to Support Acceptance.....21
- Ways of Giving Guidance.....22
- When to Intervene.....25
- How to talk with Children.....28

POWER STRUGGLES.....34

- Effective Rules.....36
- Persistence.....38
- Compromises.....39
- Consequences.....40

TECHNIQUES FOR CHANGING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR.....41

- Using Consequences.....42
- Using Redirection.....50
- Using Restraint or Holding.....52
- Using Time Out.....53
- Using Reinforcement.....55
- Using Problem-Solving..... 62

PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE.. 66

YOU CAN'T MAKE ME!

A Behavior Management Handbook

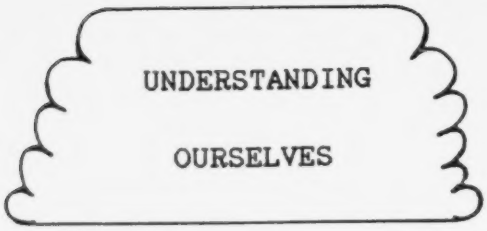
When looking at effective behavior management, we must first decide on what our long-term goals for children are. Most of us want to see children become independent, productive and self-assured adults. To accomplish this, we know they must be able to get along with others; they must be able to exercise self-control; and they must be comfortable with their feelings about themselves. How we go about making this happen for children is the key to behavior management.

When we talk about behavior management, we usually think about ways of dealing with inappropriate behavior. However, controlling inappropriate behavior is only one small part of the behavior management picture. The total picture includes:

- understanding ourselves,
- organizing the environment
- setting reasonable limits, and

- knowing appropriate techniques and strategies for changing children's behavior when it is necessary.

Broken rules, disruptive behavior, lack of cooperation and temper tantrums can be real problems for parents and caregivers. Effective behavior management begins long before such behaviors occur. By looking at the total management picture, we can more successfully guide children toward managing their own behavior rather than relying on us to do it for them. This, in turn, supports our long term goals for children - independence, self-control and good feelings about themselves.



When we understand ourselves - our tolerance levels, our preferences and our needs, we can be more effective in our relationships with children. Think about the following questions. They will help to clarify some of your strengths and weaknesses.

1. What kinds of behaviors do you deem appropriate or inappropriate for children?

2. Do you model the behaviors you expect from children or are you a "Do as I say and not what I do" person?

3. How much noise can you tolerate and for how long?

4. What happens when your limit is reached?

5. Are you flexible?

6. How much confusion is too much?

7. When a child's anger is directed toward you, what are your feelings? Do you feel hurt, angry, frustrated or or threatened?

8. What happens when the plans you've made suddenly go awry?

9. Do you need to make most of the decisions or do you share the control with the children?

10. When there is a problem, do you take the time to identify whose problem it really is?

The answers to the above questions are important because they help give us insights into our personalities. When we understand ourselves, we can plan environments and activities for children that take into account our limits.

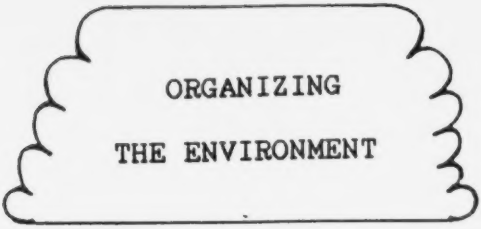
Examples:

1. If our tolerance for noise is somewhat minimal, inviting a group of children to the house and giving them band instruments to play, is inviting trouble. We may find that we are doing a lot of limit setting and are constantly on edge, not because the activity itself is inappropriate for the children but rather because our limit for noise has been reached.

2. Suppose we know we do best when things are carefully planned. Telling the children that we'll decide on the rides after we get to the park because we're rushed and anxious to get going, may prove to be a mistake when we get there. Appropriately, the children will want to get on the rides as soon as possible. Making spur of the moment decisions is definitely not our style. We get testy because we don't have a plan and they get testy because, being children, they have difficulty waiting. The end result will probably be constant nagging on their part and constant frustration and anger on our part. Much of

this could have been avoided if we had realized how important careful planning is for us.

If we take the time to really look at ourselves and to identify our strengths and our weaknesses, we may find that there are things we need to change. If we tend to be critical, directive and inflexible, we need to realize that we are not supporting healthy growth and development for children. Changes in behavior are difficult for children and adults. The first step, however, is realizing that the behavior needs to be changed. By knowing ourselves, we can lessen the negative interactions we have with children and increase the positive ones.



The environment in which children live and play often affects their behavior. It is important for parents and caregivers to take a good look at the environment to see whether or not it is supportive of self-control and independent play. Seeing things from the child's point of view rather than an adult's may give us a very different picture.

The answers to the following questions will help you avoid some pitfalls when planning activities and environments for children.

1. Does the arrangement of the room (the furniture, knick-knacks, toys, etc.) encourage appropriate use?

2. Are the things that are displayed or within reach, the things that are alright to touch?

3. Are toys, clothes, personal items and other supplies put where children can reach them?

4. Is there enough space for the children to play?

5. Are the toys, equipment or activities appropriate for their age level?

6. Is there a way to limit access to inappropriate areas or things without having to give constant reminders?

7. Has the length of their attention span been taken into account when planning an activity?

8. How easily do the children adapt to change? Has too much been planned for too little a time period?

9. Have the children been involved in the organization process?

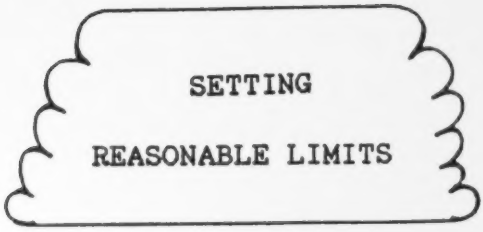
The answers to the above questions are important because they can help us prepare environments and activities for children that lessen the chances that they will need us to direct their behavior.

Examples:

1. If we plan to take our two year old and our five year old to the movies to see Pinocchio, we'd best be prepared not to see much of the movie. It is certainly an appropriate activity for the five year old, but it is the very, very rare two year old who can sit still for ten minutes, let alone one hour.

2. Let us suppose that we plan to take our toddler to the park to play in the sandbox, but there are also swings, a merry-go-round, see-saws and a wonderful, but very tall slide. We can almost be assured that the word we will most often use is a loud and resounding "NO!" Toddlers are curious and active explorers. In order to save ourselves and them a lot of unpleasantness, we should consider this ahead of time and plan a very short trip or find a sandbox that is located in an environment that is more appropriate to their age level.

When we look carefully at the environments and activities for children, taking into account their developmental levels and skills, we support their independence, their self-control and their having good feelings about themselves.



We know that while the sequence of human development is constant, the rate at which children go through the sequence varies considerably. Knowing about the process of development and being able to judge where children are developmentally can help us in setting reasonable limits for them. Consistent and fair limits help children control their own behavior and self-control is one of our long-term goals for children.

Just as in the other areas of the behavior management picture, there are some questions that we can ask that will help us in deciding whether or not the limits we set for children are appropriate.

1. Are the rules clearly stated and the reasons for them understood?

2. Are the limits appropriate developmentally?

3. Are the children's individual needs taken into account?

4. Are the limits stated simply and are they easy for the children to understand and remember?

5. Are the limits appropriate for the child?

6. Are the children involved in the rule-making process?

7. Are the children secure in the knowledge that the limits are consistent for all concerned?

8. Do the limits support the development of self-control, independence and feelings of self-worth.

Making decisions on whether or not the limits we set for children are appropriate is a very important part of the behavior management process. When children feel overwhelmed by the rules because they sense them as being unfair, overly harsh or too limiting, their response is generally negative and inappropriate. The end result is that we are constantly having to police their behavior in one way or another creating a really unpleasant situation for everyone. If parents and caregivers think about the answers to some of the above questions before setting the limits, anger and frustration may be avoided.

Examples:

1. Suppose we are at the park with a five year old and a two year old. Everyone is having a great time but the two year old keeps going over to the merry-go-round where the five year old is playing happily with a group of friends. Worried about safety, we say "no" to the two year old at least ten times with little success. As a last resort, we call the five year old over and tell her that she needs to stay off the merry-go-round. When she asks why, we tell her that it is because of the danger to the two year old. She is angry, stomps her foot and goes back to the merry-go-round anyway.

In the above example, the answers to only two questions might have helped us avoid a really unpleasant situation.

Is the rule just? No. The problem is with the two year old, not the five year old. It is unfair to ask one child to give up her good time because we cannot control another.

Is the reason for the limit valid? No. The child is not abusing

the equipment nor is she having any problems with the other children. We need to set the limit for the two year old without involving the five year old.

2. Let say that we have decided we are going to to take our two year old to the zoo. We tell him well ahead of that he needs to remember that he can only have three drinks from the vendors at the zoo. As the day wears on, he has his three drinks. A little while later, as luck would have it, he asks for a fourth drink. We tell him that the rule was "only three drinks from the vendor" but he throws a terrible tantrum anyway. There isn't any consoling him and finally we're forced to leave the zoo.

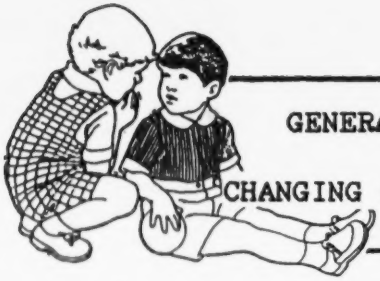
In this instance, the answer to only one of the questions would have been enough.

Is the rule appropriate developmentally? No.

Two year olds do not have an understanding of number. It is true that some of them can count from one to ten, but they do not have a true

understanding of what those numbers really represent. To the two year old, four and three and seven and eight are just names.

Consistent and fair limits can help children control their own behavior provided the children know what the limits are ahead of time and the limits are appropriate for the child and the situation. We should always review our expectations to make sure that they are not possible sources for unecessary problems.



GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR CHANGING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR

Discipline versus Punishment

Can you remember what happened the last time you were faced with having to deal with a child who was misbehaving? Do you remember if you used DISCIPLINE or PUNISHMENT to change the behavior? To some, this may seem like a silly question but, for many people, discipline and punishment mean the same thing. They are, however, very different and the differences have a great impact on the development of independence, self-control and self-worth in children.

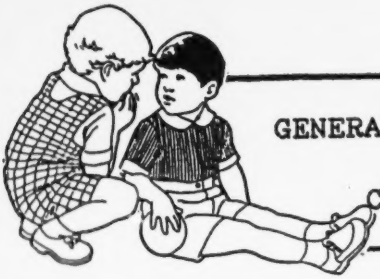
Look carefully at the chart on page 17.

DISCIPLINE	PUNISHMENT
• Controls through self awareness	• Controls through fear
• See possible consequences of actions	• Behave to avoid penalty
• Child-centered	• Adult-centered
• Increases feelings of self-worth	• Increases feelings of humiliation and inadequacy
• Builds skills for inner control to handle future problems	• Increases need to seek outside help to handle future problems
• Builds independence	• Builds dependence
• Supports problem-solving	• Gives ready-made solutions

It is obvious that, if our long-term goals for children are self-assurance, independence and productivity, the use of discipline is preferable to punishment. Discipline teaches, punishment merely controls. When we see discipline as a teaching tool rather than just as a means for stopping a behavior, we begin to realize that there are no simple solutions. Each child is unique and each problem unique to that child. Parents and caregivers must have a wide variety of strategies and techniques available in order to meet the needs of individual children.

There are some general principles about children's behavior that we should keep in mind at all times.

23



GENERAL PRINCIPLES ABOUT CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR

1. All children behave inappropriately at times Part of the way children learn is through trial and error. Inappropriate behavior is bound to occur as a matter of course. This is part of the nature of children.

2. All children use testing to gain information about the world and the people in it. This is normal and adults should expect it.

3. Children respond positively to love and nurture. The need for love is inherent in all of us and children are no exception

4. Children respond negatively to uncontrolled anger. Children need the security of knowing that adults are ultimately in control of themselves. When an adult loses self-control, children become frightened and insecure.

5. Children imitate the behaviors of adults. During the early years, before they can think and reason as adults do, children judge the rightness or wrongness of a behavior according to what they see adults doing.

Keeping these principles in mind, there are three basic questions for us to consider.

- How can we help children accept guidance?
- What are some positive ways of giving children guidance?
- When is it appropriate for an adult to intervene?

HOW CAN WE HELP CHILDREN ACCEPT ADULT GUIDANCE?

➡ Children need to know that we have their best interests at heart. Sometimes adults will say "Do it for me, please." The message to the children is that the adult has self-interest in mind. Children need to understand that we are asking them to change their behavior because it will help them in some way.

➡ It is also important that children feel that we care about them and accept them as they are. Children need to feel that they are loved despite the fact that they may sometimes do things that adults do not care for. If they do not fear a loss of love, they are more likely to be accepting of adult guidance.

➡ Parents and caregivers should remember that children are human beings. They are not puppets to be operated by pulling strings. Rather, their behaviors should be generated from an internal source so that when they are away from adult supervision, the appropriate behaviors continue.

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS OF GIVING ACCEPTABLE GUIDANCE?

➡ When we talk with children, we need to be sure that they understand us. We should have their full attention when we are speaking to them. Holding them gently by the chin, making sure we have good eye contact (kneeling to meet them on their level is a good idea) and touching them on the arm, leg or shoulder are good ways to make sure that we have their attention. Talking in simple sentences, giving them only one direction at a time and showing them as well as telling them will help in making sure they understand.

➡ Children, especially small children, become confused when they are hurried. We need to be reasonable and timely from the child's point of view. They need to be given advance warning of what we expect. Patience and an understanding of their need to have time to "finish" will make them more likely to accept our directions.

➡ Young children generally comply with adult requests if they sense that compliance is taken for granted. When children say "I don't want to," it is often just an automatic response to wanting to make their own decision. If parents and caregivers don't respond

and go on as if the children had said "yes", the children generally do as asked. Problems arise when adults get drawn into a "Don't you are tell me no!" battle of wills (see section on Power Struggles).

➡ <u>Parents and caregivers should limit their directions to the essentials</u>. Adults don't like to be nagged by children and children don't like to be nagged by adults. Too much direction can breed rebellion. The natural course of development is for children to grow toward being independent of adult supervision. We need to be willing to withdraw our supervision as we see the children moving toward greater responsiblity for themselves. Knowing that much of the way that children learn is through trial and error and experimentation, we should expect reasonable errors in judgment when the children are just beginning to take on a new area of responsibility.

➡ The words "no" and "don't" can become meaningless to children if they hear them too often. Saying "Please walk" may bring a quicker response than "Don't run."

➡ Keeping our manner and tone relatively quiet will also help. Children use adults for role models. If adults scream and yell when they are disappointed or don't get their way, children will react in the same way.

➡ Being CONSISTENT, in terms of praising or disapproving behaviors, is important. When children feel that adults are not sure of what it is that they want, they become insecure and a little frightened.

➡ Children should not be held to a uniform standard of performance. Cognitive, emotional, physical and social development vary greatly among individual children of the same age. We must always evaluate the circumstance on the basis of where the children are developmentally and how we can best help support them on the road toward adulthood.

➡ Children need recognition of their accomplishments, no matter how small those accomplishment may be. Children who have difficulty behaving appropriately need a lot of encouragement when they finally manage to do so.

➡ Parents and caregivers need to give children opportunities for making choices. Giving children a choice between blue socks and red socks, vanilla, chocolate and strawberry or the park and the zoo helps develop initiative and independence. It is important to be sure, however, that we can live with whatever choice they make.

WHEN SHOULD THE ADULT INTERVENE?

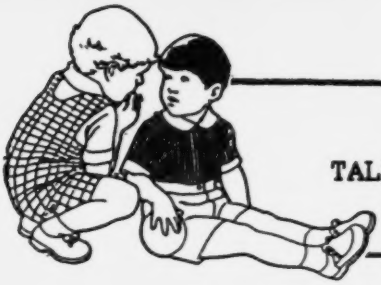
Parents and caregivers should offer help only when children appear to need help. We should encourage them to find out things for themselves. Risk and failure are part of the learning process. It is important for children to learn to solve their own problems rather than always seeking us out to solve the problems for them. Questions or suggestions as to alternatives may help them realize other possibilities. Let them move ahead on their own as much as possible and is practical.

Their day-to-day performance will vary, just as ours does, according to their physical and emotional condition.

➡ When children are in a social conflict situation, we need to let them work it through if they can. The little girl who comes home saying, "They aren't being nice to me," needs some information about how to handle children who behave negatively toward her. Some of us might respond by saying, "They aren't very nice anyway so don't feel badly," or by going over to the group and insisting that they change their attitude. Neither of these responses gives the child any information about how to handle the situation the next time it occurs. Children need to learn self-reliance as well as cooperation. If left to themselves, they will often end conflicts and solve difficulties in satisfactory ways of their own. If, after trying to find their own solution, they are still having a problem, the adult should not give them a solution but rather suggest some ways they can go about finding their own solution. This is a valuable learning experience and it might be stifled if the adult intervenes too hastily.

➡ There are no hard and fast rules for making a decision as to when we need to step in. Knowing the children well - their strengths and their weaknesses, will help. A good rule of thumb is to step in only when it is

necessary to prevent physical or emotional injury. If the children are not well matched (one is much bigger or older and smarter, etc.), we may have to step in and suggest some possible solutions.



TALKING WITH CHILDREN

The way we talk to children greatly affects how much they hear and how willing they are to accept what we say. In conversations with children, certain ways of saying things will produce better results than other ways do. Parents and caregivers need to remember to **ACCENT THE POSITIVE AND ELIMINATE THE NEGATIVE.** Emphasize what you **WANT** children to do rather than what you don't want them to do.

Let's look at the following examples.

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
• Please sit down when you slide.	• Don't stand on the slide.
• Remember, we need to dig in the in the sand.	• Don't throw the sand.
• Be sure to use both hands when you climb.	• You'll fall if you don't watch out.
• Drink your milk please.	• Don't you want your milk?
• Talking in a quieter voice will make people more likely to listen to you.	• Don't shout.
• Please wipe your hands before you play with those.	• Don't touch anything with those wet hands.

Parents and caregivers want to support the development of good social skills in children. Sometimes the way that we express our thoughts can teach children strategies for disciplining themselves. It is important that we let children know that we understand their feelings and give them an opportunity to realize the feelings of others.

Examples:

1. Ask him if you want to use the toy. It makes people angry when you grab things from them. It makes you angry when they grab something from you. Ask first and then listen for the answer. If it's no, see if he will let you play with it later. If not, you can come back to me and we'll find a solution together.

2. You need to remember that hitting hurts. If you are angry, you need to tell him. I don't let anyone hurt you and I can't let you hurt anyone else. I know you are angry and that's alright. When you are angry you can hit the clown, punch the punching bag, pound the bench with the hammer or stamp your feet and yell, but you may not hit or hurt people when you are angry. Use words to tell people that you are angry.

3. I know you are disappointed about the movie. We should have talked about it earlier. Mary needed to know ahead of time that you wanted to go so that she didn't make other plans. I know you're sad, but let's see if she can go tomorrow.

Learning to talk with children in a way that supports self-control and good feelings is not easy for any of us. It requires a lot of forethought and practice. The following phrases support good feelings and self-discipline. Using them on a regular basis will make the negative moments become fewer and farther between and support the child's budding self-worth.

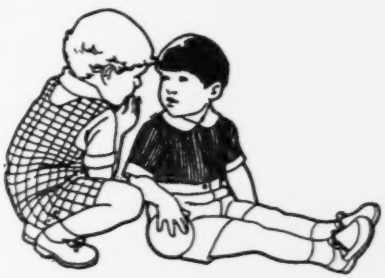
1. I know that you're angry, but you may not .....(action). You can ..... (proper action) but (inappropriate action) can hurt someone. I would not let anyone hurt you because I care about you and I can't let you hurt anyone else.

2. Thank you .....(child's name) for doing such a good job. You did it all by yourself and that is just terrific. I know you must be really proud of yourself.

3. Remember, we need to .....(action) because .....(reason). I care about you and I wouldn't want you to .....(consequence).

4. I know it's hard to stop when you're having a good time. If we don't.....(activity), we won't be able to .....(other activity). Supppose I set the timer (egg timer, hour-glass, alarm clock, etc.) for five more minutes. It will remind you that it's time to stop. Now why don't you get back to ..... (activity).

5. Good. You remembered. That's great. Remembering is hard to do.

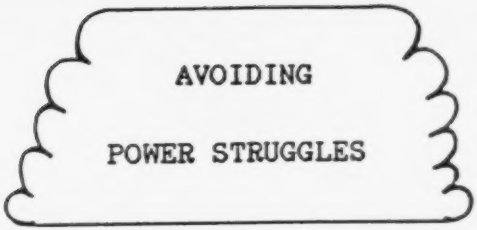


There are some words and phrases that give children the message that we appreciate what they have accomplished.

Words and Phrases that Show Appreciation

That's really nice.
Thank you very much.
Wow!
That's great.
I like the way you're doing that.
Keep it up.
That's terrific.
That's a good idea.
You did it all by yourself.
You've been a big help to me.
Very good.
You did a wonderful job.
That was very kind of you.
Beautiful!
Fantastic!
It looks like you've worked hard on this.
Good thinking.
Now you've got the hang of it.

It is easy to exhibit positive self-discipline when it is appreciated by those from whom we wish approval.



One of the biggest problems for parents and caregivers is avoiding the "I will. No you won't." battle that is sometimes called the "power stuggle." Children have an uncanny knack for drawing us into the fight in order to deter us from the real issue. We, in turn, rise to the bait because we feel our control is being threatened. It's important to understand that in power stuggles with children, adults are always the losers. Even when it appears that we have won the battle, we lose because the anger and resentment that the children feel toward us when this happens, comes out in other ways.

Examples:

Suppose it's 7:45 and bedtime is just around the corner. We say "Are you ready for your bath?" and the response is a loud and resounding "No!" The battle goes downhill from this point although, finally after many threats and lots of crying, he does get in the tub. After we put him to bed, we spend the next two hours getting drinks of water for a child we know cannot possibly still be thirsty. A clever parent understands that the

price for getting in the tub is a hassle about going to sleep.

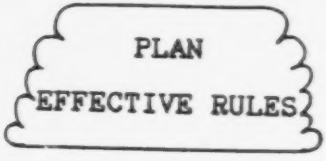
The key skill in avoiding power struggles is knowing how to remain in a position of control without setting up an "You will. I won't." situation.

In the above example, saying "It's time for your bath," rather than "Do you want to take your bath," would have helped to avoid the power struggle. The child still might have responded with "But, I don't want a bath." At this time, the parent or caregiver should respond to the child's feelings with "I know you don"t want a bath" but be persistant in the request by saying "but it is bath time." We should then give the child an idea about how he might benefit from the behavior by saying, "Maybe if we get finished quickly enough, we'll have time for an extra story before bedtime."

All children are resistant to adult control at some point in time. It is perfectly normal. However, rather than allowing the children to determine our response, we need to be in charge of our own actions.

When adults are out of control - that is, they lose their ability to think and reason appropriately, they become poor role models. Our goal should always be to help children learn self-control. Our role is to help them change their behavior by showing them how adults handle their problems and by giving them some alternative approaches for solving their own problems.

The following are some guidelines for avoiding getting into power struggles with children.



The best way to deal with power struggles and conflict is to avoid them. A few quality rules, consistently enforced, can be helpful. Good rules can provide children with a secure world. They can provide a baseline for children's behavior. They define the parameters for appropriate behavior.

** A simple rule of thumb for setting the rules is "We should not do anything that would hurt ourselves, others or things."

Use the following as a guideline for rule-making.

1. Make sure that the rule is clear to both you and the children. Words do not always mean the same things to all people. Putting the toys away may mean one thing to us and something very different to the children.

2. Make sure that the rule is enforceable. There are three questions that we should ask ourselves before we make the rule.

Do we model this behavior?
Do we really expect the child to obey the rule?
Can we be sure the rule is being followed?

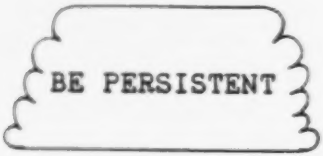
If the answer to any of these is "No", the rule is probably a poor one.

3. Talk about the rule. Parents and caregivers need to sell the rules. Children need to know why the rule is needed or how they will benefit from it being obeyed. It is at this point that the children ought to be asked how they feel about the rule. Sometimes they fool us and have different ideas and excellent suggestions.

4. Plan for what you will do if the rule is not obeyed. We need to give advance thought to what our actions will be if the rule is not obeyed. More often than not, adults tend to overreact. There are a variety of

things we can do from discussing the rule again to imposing some consequence.

5. Have only a few necessary rules. Just as too many cooks spoil the broth, too many rules overwhelm the child. A small number of well planned rules can go a long way.



All too often, children hassle us because they can count on the fact that we, if nagged long enough, we will change our minds. We never plan to encourage children in this way, but unfortunately we do so. Children learn very quickly that what we ask of them does not have to be taken seriously if:

1. We explode in anger in the face of resistance and then immediately back off filled with remorse and guilt,

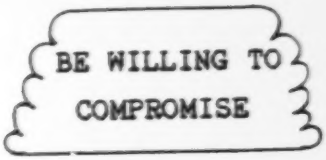
or

2. We make empty threats that we know we cannot carry through and switch to bribes and pleas in order to get them to change,

or

3. We go along with an unreasonable request "just this one time" and then conveniently forget it the next time around.

Conflict will lessen if we let children know that we will be persistent in our requests and refusals, regardless of their attempts to change our minds. By calmly repeating our position, recognizing their feelings and being persistant, we give children the message that we are firmly prepared to pursue our goals and will not be swayed. Giving recognition to their feelings supports self-esteem. Winning becomes much less important when we feel good about ourselves.



The old Asian custom of "saving face" is a good one. People are more likely to accept losing if their self-worth is not threatened. There are several things we can do to help children "save face" when they are feeling very negative about what we are asking them to do.

Give them choices and options

Say "no" but provide them with an alternative

Make an exchange if possible

Look for a mutual solution

Ask the child to suggest a solution

DO NOT ACCEPT

THE CHALLENGE

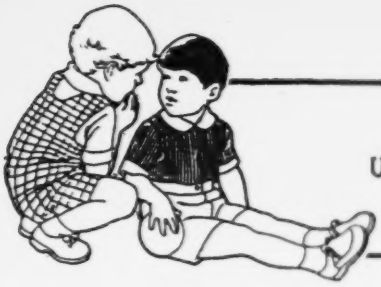
Sometimes children respond negatively just to find out how adults will react. This type of "testing" behavior is common to adults as well as to children. We use testing to find out information about people or situations that are new to us. Children test our confidence in ourselves by trying to get us involved in a power struggle. Do the unexpected by not accepting the challenge. This gives them the message that power or control is not at issue. As adults, we need to accept their feelings, understand their resistance but let them know that we are confident in our ability as parents or caregivers.

SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES FOR CHANGING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR

Unfortunately, there will be times when, no matter how expertly we try to avoid conflict, it just doesn't happen. In viewing discipline as a teaching opportunity, we find that <u>there are no specific techniques that will work with every child for every problem at all times</u>.

Our approach to discipline must always relate to the problem at hand and the developmental needs of the child. Any consequences must be logical and immediately follow the action if we want children to learn from the experience.

The following techniques support the healthy development of indpendence, self-control and self-worth. When used appropriately, they help children become their own problem-solvers, an essential factor in becoming self-disciplined.



USING CONSEQUENCES

Basic Principles

1. Consequences should never be viewed as punishments.

2. Children must never view the consequences as hostile moves by parents or caregivers. Make sure the consequence fits the misdeed. Adults have a tendency to "overkill" when it comes to setting consequences for misbehavior. Telling children that the penalty for not putting the toys away is two weeks without television is not appropriate.

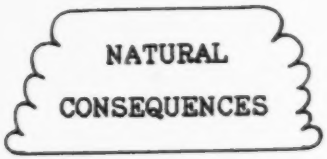
   There must be a relationship between the consequence and the misdeed. If children feel the consequence is reasonable, they are more likely to accept it.

3. Parents and caregivers should not relieve children of the discomfort caused by a consequence.

4. The logic of the consequence should be obvious.

5. Consequences should not be imposed arbitrarily by parents or caregivers. Ask the child to figure out a plan for changing his behavior. When we involve children in finding solutions to their problems, they are more likely to make sure the problem is resolved. When we are personally involved in planning something we tend to take better care of it and the same holds true for children.

6. Parents and caregivers must be aware of all of the possible outcomes of the consequence and be able to live with them. Never argue with a child about a penalty. From the outset, there should be an agreement between the child and the adult as to what is expected and what the consequence will be if the expectation is not realized. Once both parties have accepted the rule and the consequence agreed upon, it is important to be consistent and to carry through with the consequence.



Sometimes children find out about the consequences of their actions as a matter of course. We call this type of technique, natural or logical consequences.

Example:

Johnny always dawdles at breakfast time and is often almost late for school. We don't want him to be late because it reflects badly on us and because we really don't want him to miss school. We've tried to get him to hurry up by promising him special treats and threatening him with terrible consequences. So far nothing has worked. We finally decide to let him dawdle as he always does and say nothing. That afternoon, he comes home from school very upset because he was late and didn't get there in time to vote for class president. When he tells us his sad tale of woe, we should respond by:

1. accepting his feelings,

   "I know you feel badly about not being able to vote."

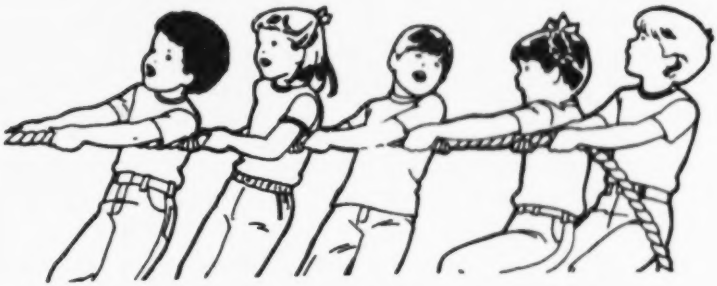
2. identifying the behavior that caused the consequence, and

   "Taking too much time at breakfast may be making you late."

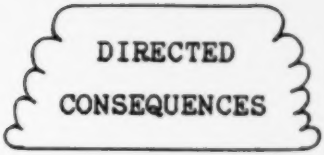
3. being willing to help him look at what he can do to solve the problem if he is ready.

"What do you think you might do to make breakfast go along a little faster? If I can help, you know I will be glad to do so."

Letting children learn through experience is an important teaching tool. We need to be careful that we do not destroy any opportunities for this happening in our desire to keep children from feeling discomfort. Some discomfort goes along with the risks that we take when we are learning. However, it is always necessary for parents and caregivers to be sure that the consequence does not threaten the child's physical safety or emotional health.



Natural consequences have meaning only when adults do not interfere with them. Despite the fact that allowing the consequence to happen naturally sometimes takes a little more time, such restraint on the part of the adult often helps to avoid a great deal of unpleasantness later on.



Sometimes, rather than allowing natural consequences to happen, we need to find a casual way of calling them to the child's attention. For example, we cannot allow a child to find out that the stove is hot by touching it and burning himself or that the knife is sharp by handling it improperly and cutting himself. When adults set up the situation so that the consequence occurs, we call the technique - Directed Consequences.

Example:

Mary is never at the dinner table on time. She is generally at least 15 minutes late and everyone else has already finished eating. The cleanup is always delayed because we;ve had to wait for Mary. We've tried everything from begging to taking away her T.V. privileges, but nothing has worked. One day we decide, as a family, that when everyone who has come when called has finished, we will clean up the dinner and not serve any more. Anyone who is hungry will have to serve themselves. Mary comes to the table late but this time finds no dinner waiting. She cries that we are being unfair and that she

wants to eat. We should respond to Mary by:

1. accepting her feelings,

   "I know you are angry and feel that we are being unfair,"

2. identifying the behavior that caused the consequence to occur and,

   "but we talked about this last night at the dinner table. We discussed what would happen if people didn't come when they were called."

3. being willing to help her find a solution to the problem if she is ready.

   "Why do you think you're having such a problem getting to the dinner table on time? Perhaps we can work together on finding a solution.

Using consequences effectively can be a power tool for guiding children's behavior. It teaches children a respect for order and conformity. Many adults have difficulty in understanding the differences between punishments and consequences, yet those differences are very important.

CONSEQUENCES	PUNISHMENTS
1. have inner logic acceptable to child (If you do not eat your dinner, you will be hungry later on.)	have little or no logic (If you do not eat your dinner, you may not watch T.V.)
2. are a natural result of a misbehavior (As long as you scream and yell, we cannot talk about what is is bothering you.)	are a retaliation for a misbehavior (If you keep screaming and yelling, I refuse talk to you.)
3. are open invitations for self control (I am sorry but you cannot stay in the room if you continue to disturb us.)	are closed and invite outside control (I'm tired of you disturbing everyone. Go to your room.)
4. are given in a warm and friendly manner	are given in a harsh and angry tone
5. emphasize that it is an issue of order not control	emphasize that it is an issue of power and control
6. are directed toward the behavior and do not threaten personal values	are directed toward the child and increase feelings of rejection

When using consequences as a technique for changing children's behavior, parents and caregivers need to be sure that are consistent and persistent in their endeavors. Misdirected sympathy is definitely a pitfall. Giving children "just one more chance" is often more harmful than helpful. There should always be opportunities for children to redo at a later time without an "I told you so." from the adult, but at the moment of the action, there should be no question of the consequence happening.

USING REDIRECTION

When a child is able to be distracted from pursuing an inappropriate behavior through replacement, we call the technique - Redirection.

Infants are generally very susceptible to this type of technique. Their attention span is short. For them, out of sight is out of mind. Very often, we can stop them before an unwanted behavior occurs.

Older children will generally require a substitute before accepting redirection. When adults give children adequate reasons for why behaviors need to be redirected, children soon learn to redirect themselves.

When thinking about using redirection, we first need to think about WHY the behavior is occurring. Once we've figured out the WHY, we can decide on the WHAT to use as a replacement.

Examples:

Two children are arguing in the sandbox over a single pail. The most expedient way to handle this would be to find another pail or other container for one of the children. We could then redirect toward the other pail. If another pail is not available, we might try to get one of them involved in an exciting sand activity that does not require a pail.

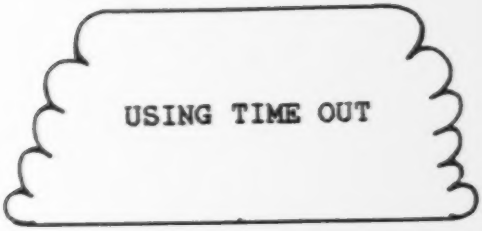
A four year old is climbing all over the tables in the picnic area at the park. The behavior is unacceptable but we know that it normal that four year olds climb. In fact, we know that climbing is important for the development of body coordination and so we want to redirect the climbing rather than stop it. We should encourage the child to continue climbing but suggest that trees, climbers or jungle gyms might be more fun.

Most of the time finding acceptable substitutes is not a problem. Sometimes, however, there is no dissuading children from their appointed destination. In this case, we should probably turn to an alternative method.

USING RESTRAINT OR HOLDING

Sometimes children become so upset and so intense, they lose all their ability to talk and reason. When this occurs, parents and caregivers should hold the children close to their body and, in a soothing manner and tone, tell them, "I know you are really angry and you would like to hurt me (or another child perhaps). I love you and I can't let you hurt anyone. I wouldn't let anyone hurt you and I can't let you hurt anyone else or yourself. As soon as you're a bit calmer, we'll talk about what has made you so angry."

Children who are screaming and thrashing will need to be soothed in this manner before we can attempt to help them. There is no way to help children who are hysterical until they have quieted down sufficiently to talk. The warmth of our bodies and the soothing tone of our voices gives them the security they need to become calmer.



When we use time as a means for getting ourselves and our thoughts together, we are using a technique called Time Out. Time Out is perhaps one of the most widely misunderstood and misused disciplinary methods. Sometimes it is used as a punishment for a behavior - "You don't seem to be able to control yourself. You need a time out. Sit in the chair until I tell you that you can get up." However, it should be used as a technique for giving children some time to get themselves together when they have lost control and are unable to reason - "You need some time to get control of yourself. Sit over here for a moment and when you feel that you are ready to talk, come tell me and I'll listen."

When using Time Out, the following principles should be observed if we want this to be a positive learning experience which leads toward self-discipline.

Basic Principles

1. Time Out should never be used as a punishment. Children should never be threatened with or fearful of a time out.

2. Time out should never be used to humiliate a child. There should be no specificed time out place or chair. It is a moment to gain control of oneself and therefore it can happen in any place.

3. Time out should last for as long as the child feels is needed to calm down. If children underestimate the length of time they need, adults should ask them to take another moment.

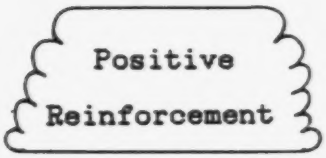
4. Time out can be used by adults and children to provide a moment for a productive talk about feelings - after the child has calmed down. It is only after calm has been restored that talk can be productive.

(Principles adapted from "Building Self-Control" by C.S. Miller in Young Children, November, 1984.)

USING REINFORCEMENT

The strengthening or weakening of behaviors due to the reaction of others toward those behaviors is called Reinforcement. It is important to realize that reinforcement is always occurring. It is part of the way that humans relate to one another and it helps each of us learn which behaviors are productive and which are not. Getting satisfaction or recognition for doing something reinforces the behavior and makes us more likely to perform it again. The best reinforcers are those that build good feelings and increase our sense of self-worth.

There are four basic ideas to remember when using reinforcement.



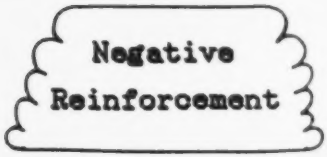
A positive reinforcer is anything that is needed or desired by someone. When a behavior is immediately followed by a positive reinforcer, that behavior is strengthened and will generally occur more frequently. The immediacy of the reinforcer is very important. If too much time elapses between the behavior and the reinforcer, its power is lessened.

Example:

If Joey has remembers not to bite when he wants a toy from another child, we will want to reinforce this type of behavior. The minute we notice that Joey has used an appropriate method for getting the toy, we should say to him, "Good, Joey. You remembered to ask him if he would give you the toy. That's terrific and I'm really proud of you."

Telling Joey that we are proud, gives him good feelings about his self-worth. Because he feels a sense of satisfaction and approval, he will probably try to repeat the behavior the next time in the hopes that those same feelings will reoccur.

61



A negative reinforcer is something that is unpleasant or not desired by the child. Negative reinforcers work in two ways.

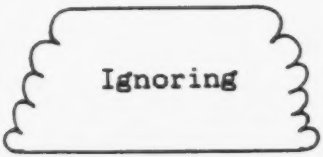
1. They strengthen the response that takes them away.
2. They stop the behavior that brought them on, momentarily.

Example:

Karen has difficulty asking for what she wants. Usually she just grabs things without even asking. After trying to deal with this over a long period of time, when it happens again, we say, "I'll be glad to give it to you when you remember to ask rather than grab."

In the above example, we have tried to stop Karen from acting in a particular way, by arranging for her to stop the negative reinforcer (not having the toy) when she is willing to act appropriately. It is her willingness to change her own behavior that will take away the negative reinforcer. The minute she remembers to ask rather than grab, we should say, "Thank you. You remembered to ask rather than grab. That makes me proud of you." in order to positively reinforce the behavior we like.

Negative reinforcers are sometimes confused with punishments. The difference is that punishments are imposed by others and taken away by others. Negative reinforcers allow children to control their own behavior.



One of the most time-honored bits of advice from psychologists is to ignore behavior that we want to discourage and attend, instead, to behaviors we want to encourage. A behavior will be stopped (or weakened) when it is followed by no reinforcement whatsoever.

Example:

Two year old Tommy has picked up a piece of candy from the grocery store shelf. We tell him that the candy belongs to the storekeeper and he can't have it right now. He reacts in accordance with the timeless two year old tradition and throws a terrible temper tantrum. We need to make a decision. If we ignore the behavior totally and go about our business as if he

was not there, we know the tantrum will eventually stop. The hard part is putting up with all of the dirty looks we get from everyone else in the store. If we give in and respond to the tantrum by taking him out of the store, we need to realize that we are reinforcing the chances that he will throw a tantrum the next time.

Unfortunately, a one-shot application of Ignoring is rarely sufficient. In fact, it may get worse. Persistence is a key when we use Ignoring as a technique and parents and caregivers are often frustrated with how long it takes.

Ignoring is an especially appropriate response to attention-getting actions such as clownishness, temper tantrums or excessive dependence on adult help. Children persist in such behaviors in the mistaken belief that the adult's reaction, negative though it may be, is better than nothing.

If we are going to try to use ignoring as a discipline technique, we need to be sure of the following.

1. If the behavior is ignored, no harmful consequences will be suffered by the child.

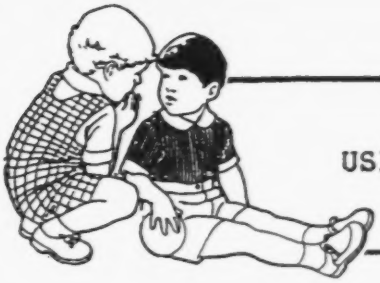
2. If the behavior is ignored, the message to the child is not disdain or disgust. Any response will be interpreted as attention and therefore we need to be really careful that absolutely no response is given.

3. If we are going to ignore a behavior, we must ignore it on a consistent basis. When children sense an inconsistency in our behavior, their behavior is reinforced.

Schedule of Reinforcement

When we are considering using Reinforcement, the timing or schedule of the reinforcement is very important. When desirable behavior is reinforced each time it occurs, results can be observed in relatively short periods of time. It is hard to continually use positive reinforcement so, after a behavior has been observed happening over a long period of time, we can switch to what is called an intermittent schedule. In this instance, behavior is reinforced one time and not reinforced the next. The intervals between reinforcers are gradually lengthened and the behavior becomes durable over time.

Using Reinforcement to change behavior can be very effective. As with so many of the other behavior techniques, parents and caregivers must be persistent and consistent if it is to be successful.



USING PROBLEM-SOLVING

One of the most important concepts in dealing with children's behavior is the belief that children should be involved in determining solutions to problems. Being sure that communication lines are open and that we are clear and direct makes this job easier. Children must know what is expected and what is accepted.

Through problem-solving, children learn to take greater responsbility for the consequences of their actions and have a greater awareness of the needs of others. Learning to problem-solve will also increase their decision-making skills. When children are involved in the process of problem-solving, they are more likely to adhere to their decisions.

Problems are incidents of inappropriate behavior which cause distress over and over. In order to use problem-solving effectively, the following steps must be followed.

1. Define the problem.

2. Determine who owns the problem.

3. Involve all concerned parties, making sure that everyone involved understands the problem and the end goal.

4. Brainstorm alternatives

5. Choose a plan of action

6. Set a time to assess the plan

Let's look at the following example.

Example:

> The mornings have become dreadful. Everybody is in a rush to get out, whether it's to work or to school. Tempers are short and everyone leaves the house feeling tense. No one is ready to face the day and no one can do their best when they are feeling distressed.

When we have identified something as a problem, it is first necessary to decide in our minds exactly what the problem is. In the above example the problem is that the morning routine is not working.

Once we've defined the problem, we need to decide whose problem it is. Sometimes we see problems as belonging to others when, in truth, they belong to us. However, in the above example, everyone owns a piece of the problem.

Now that we've decided on who owns the problem, it's time for everyone in the household to get together. The problem needs to be clearly stated so that we make sure that everyone understands that it is a problem. The goal in this example would be to find a more workable morning routine.

At this point, we should encourage everyone to try to think of different ways of making the morning run more smoothly and talk about the suggested alternatives.

With everyone's input, we should begin to determine a plan of action. Having someone write down the plan will help to make sure that everyone knows exactly what is expected.

Be sure to set up a time to assess whether or not the plan has been successful or needs revision. This step is often omitted and its omission can cause later problems.

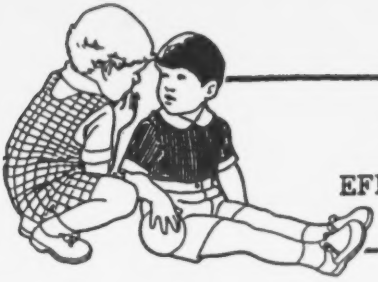
The above example reflects using problem-solving with older children. When using problem-solving with younger children, we will probably need to give them greater direction in helping them to think of appropriate alternatives. Simple phrases like:

"How can you...?",
"What could you do to...?", or
"What do you think might have been...?"

help children to direct their thinking. Children learn very quickly

to generate their own solutions when adults give them strategies for doing so.

Problem-solving should not only be used to solve behavior problems. It is also very effective in solving problems between two individuals - adult to adult, adult to child amd child to child. When we use problem-solving in this way, it is called NEGOTIATION.



PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE

When we implement techniques for discipline, we take the risk of choosing an inappropriate technique or being too punitive. If we keep the following principles in mind, we will find that our methods will support the long-term goals of self-control, independence and self-worth that we have set for ourselves with children.

1. The goal of discipline to help children become self-controlled. This means that their control will be internally motivated and not adult-imposed.

2. Any discipline should be applied in a way that supports the child's self-worth.

3. Discipline must immediately follow the action. Children cannot relate to future consequences.

4. The technique must be appropriate for the individual child and take into account his or her developmental levels.

5. Help children understand why they are being disciplined. The world we live in operates according to a particular set of behaviors and children need to understand that discipline is a way of making their lives in this world more pleasant.

6. To be effective, there must be follow-through. Idle threats and broken promises give children mixed messages and encourage further testing of the limits.

7. Understand that progress is slow. Time and patience are required when we want to change behaviors. Disappointment will be lessened if our expectations are reasonable.

A FINAL MESSAGE

Be courageous in the face of others who do not understand why we discipline instead of punish. Help them to begin to see how important it is to support the growth of self-worth, self-control and independence in children. If we want children to become self-assured, productive and competent adults, we must be willing to take the time to discipline them appropriately.

Notes and ideas
of your own.....

Notes .... cont. ...

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